ELECTIONS BC
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

Service Plan

2006/07 - 2008/09

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

Elections BC.
Service plan. – 2002/03/2004/05

Annual.
ISSN 1710-4874 = Service plan (Elections British Columbia)

1. Elections BC – Periodicals. 2. Elections – British Columbia – Periodicals. I. Title. II. Title: Elections BC. Province of British Columbia service plan.

JL438.E43 353.4'8 C2004-960056-7

For more information on Elections BC
Visit our website at:
http://www.elections.bc.ca

I am pleased to present the 2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan outlining Elections BC's goals, objectives and strategies to be achieved over the next three years.

On September 12, 2005, the provincial Throne Speech outlined three tightly integrated, complex electoral events that were to be administered prior to the May 2009 provincial general election.

The B.C. government committed to the conduct of a full enumeration of voters prior to the scheduled May 12, 2009 provincial general election, to ensure that the provincial voters list is of good quality. Government committed to proceeding with a scheduled redistribution of electoral boundaries, and to extending the mandate of the Electoral Boundaires Commission to develop constituencies under two electoral systems. Government also committed to conducting a referendum on electoral reform in tandem with local government elections on November 15, 2008. Voters would choose whether to retain the current single-member plurality (SMP) system or change to the single transferable vote (STV) system. The referendum result would determine the electoral system and associated electoral boundaries to be used to conduct the May 12, 2009 provincial general election.

Detailed research undertaken by my staff indicated that conducting the referendum in tandem with the local government election in November 2008 was problematic. If the referendum resulted in STV being the electoral system used for the May 2009 election, scarcely four months would remain before writs were issued. I advised a Legislative Committee that the aggressive timetable required to conduct an election under a new electoral system so soon after the decision to change would result in extreme risks and high costs.

On April 27, 2006, the Premier announced in the Legislature that the date of the referendum would be moved to be held in conjunction with the May 12, 2009 provincial general election.

With the change in timing, Elections BC staff will now have an opportunity to explore the most efficient and effective means to fully meet its legislative mandate in administering the enumeration, implementing new electoral boundaries and holding a province-wide referendum in conjunction with the May 2009 provincial general election. We will also continue to research and explore ways to support and administer STV in British Columbia should the referendum result in a new electoral system in this province.

Every Elections BC staff member has been involved in developing this Service Plan's goals, objectives and strategies. Establishing clear goals, realistic objectives and meaningful performance measures guides our work and helps us ensure that organizational efforts stay focused on the results we want to achieve.

Harry Neufeld
Chief Electoral Officer
May 2006

Elections BC's Vision, Mission and Mandate

Vision

To be leaders in electoral administration.

Mission

To serve democracy in British Columbia through the fair and impartial administration of the provincial electoral process.

Mandate

To administer the provincial electoral process in British Columbia in accordance with the *Election Act*, *Recall and Initiative Act*, and *Constitutional Amendment Approval Act*.

Resource Summary

The activities of Elections BC are driven by the legislation it administers and the associated actions of its clients. The timing of by-elections, recall and initiative petitions and other electoral events are not controlled by Elections BC. In consideration of the unpredictable nature of the work of the office, both the *Election Act* and the *Recall and Initiative Act* establish that all necessary expenses required for the administration of those Acts must be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recognizes that the budget needs of Elections BC are demand driven and has established a process whereby the Chief Electoral Officer advises the Chair of the Committee in writing when additional funds are required to administer electoral events. This process has been followed for all electoral events since 2002.

When Elections BC presented the 2006/07 budget proposal to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in November 2005, the Chief Electoral Officer advised the Committee that, because of the significant implications of the work associated with commitments made in the September 2005 Throne Speech, Elections BC was unable at that time to provide three years of spending estimates. A great deal of research, planning and legislative development will be necessary before Elections BC will be able to provide accurate estimates of the impact to our core annual operating budget as well as the budget for the various pending electoral events.

The following page provides a summary of the financial and human resources available to Elections BC in fiscal 2006/07 for on-going operations and purchases of capital assets. On-going operating costs do not include costs associated with the detailed planning, preparation and conduct of large scale electoral events, such as elections, electoral boundary redistributions, enumerations, or referenda.

Costs associated with administering the enumeration, 2009 referendum and provincial general election will be reported separately. It is clear that to successfully prepare for and administer these events, Elections BC will require significantly more staff than our base allocation of 39 permanent staff. Additional funding requirements that may arise from these events are not reflected in this plan.

Resource Summary Table

ON-GOING OPERATING COSTS	2006/07 Planned $
Funding	
Core appropriation	6,545,000
Total Funding	6,545,000
Expenses for On-going Operating Costs	
Salaries and benefits	2,873,770
Amortization	715,551
Building occupancy charges	392,970
Office expenses and telecommunications	263,166
Corporate information systems	1,267,410
District Electoral Officer fees	48,350
Address and boundary maintenance	349,390
Voters list maintenance	125,520
Initiative	-
Political entity reporting	174,550
Recall	-
Officer salary and benefits	284,323
Voter education	50,000
Total Expenses for On-going Operating Costs	6,545,000
On-going Funding Returned	-
CAPITAL ASSETS	
Funding	
Personal computer hardware and software	180,000
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	650,000
Office furniture and equipment	-
Tenant improvements	-
Total Funding for Capital Assets	830,000
Expenditures for Capital Assets	
Personal computer hardware and software	180,000
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	**650,000**
Office furniture and equipment	-
Tenant improvements	-
Total Expenditures for Capital Assets	830,000
Potential Capital Asset Funding Returned	-
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)	39

Note: These expenditures are for on-going activities only and do not include costs of preparing for scheduled or on-demand electoral events.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Elections BC's goals, objectives and strategies have been substantially modified to better reflect the necessary focus and direction of our organization over the next three years to address the challenges it faces.

Elections BC has identified four goals:

1. **Ensure ongoing support and enhancement of the electoral process.**

   This goal recognizes the significant volume of work Elections BC must do between events. It includes keeping electoral information up-to-date, maintaining legislative and policy frameworks, and ensuring the appropriate infrastructure and business processes are in place to support the effective and efficient delivery of the electoral process.

2. **Ensure effective and efficient administration of electoral events.**

   This goal flows directly from the mission statement, and focuses on electoral events. It relates to how Elections BC prepares for and administers events, and includes the key strategies that will be implemented to achieve success.

3. **Provide an inclusive and accessible electoral process.**

   This goal recognizes that the electoral process must be inclusive and accessible to those it serves. It focuses on reaching out to voters and other core clients, assessing their needs and then delivering quality services that meet those needs – where possible and cost efficient. It also includes how Elections BC communicates externally and educates the public.

4. **Be a learning organization that develops and shares best practices.**

   This goal flows from Elections BC's vision, recognizing that to be leaders there must also be internal leadership through staff development, and ensuring that work is conducted using best practices. It emphasizes the value placed on establishing a learning culture, and supports the importance of professional development at Elections BC. It also reflects the value of partnerships and cooperation in developing and sharing best practices.

The objectives and strategies that Elections BC will employ to achieve these goals over the next three years are identified on the following pages, with associated performance measures. Due to the small size of the ongoing organization, all program areas must collaborate on achieving these objectives and strategies.

Goal 1 – Ensure ongoing support and enhancement of the electoral process

Objective 1 – Produce quality and timely electoral information through the application of appropriate processes

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Voters list quality (%): currency and coverage	Currency 79% Coverage 90%	Currency 77% Coverage 88%	Currency 79% Coverage 89%	Currency 85% Coverage 92%
Client and appointee contact information updates processed within three business days	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Voters list – decrease cost per transaction by data source	Baseline to be determined	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Voters list – decrease exception rates by data source (Vital Statistics, online voter registration, multiple address change website, local government)[1]	19.16%	decrease exception rate 2% annually	decrease exception rate 2% annually	decrease exception rate 2% annually

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Partner with Elections Canada on data quality measurements and improvement initiatives
- Establish data standards for all electoral information (currency, coverage and accuracy)
- Conduct cost/benefit analysis of data from external sources
- Document business processes and procedures and maintain in an accessible format
- Review business procedures and identify and implement improvements

[1] Elections BC has had a continuous voters list for over 70 years, and was the first jurisdiction in Canada to computerize the voters list

Goal 1 continued

Objective 2 – Develop and maintain policy and legislative frameworks that permit innovation and facilitate compliance

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Annual financial filings – rates of late filers and non-filers	Baseline to be determined	0%	0%	0%
Recommendations for legislative amendments presented to Election Advisory Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policies – current policies documented and communicated	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Work proactively and collaboratively with legislative counsel and policy analysts to shape the development of necessary legislation
- Develop legislation and policies that simplify processes, resolve clarity issues, and improve services to voters and clients
- Develop legislative frameworks for Throne Speech events by specified target dates
- Document policies and maintain in an accessible format
- Document legislative interpretation and maintain in an accessible format
- Monitor compliance and evaluate legislation and policy changes to address issues

Goal 1 continued

Objective 3 – Maintain a sound infrastructure that meets our organizational needs at different stages of our business cycle

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Operating budget – manage within 5% variance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Service Level Agreement (SLA) – service level targets established and met[2]	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Develop a corporate risk management plan
- Streamline business processes for records, dockets and inventory management
- Develop and monitor five year support plans for Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance and Administration and Communications
- Develop and maintain a corporate authorities matrix
- Develop and implement internal communication processes and tools

[2] Elections BC is in the process of adjusting the service levels and measurement criteria for its information technology outsourcing agreement with EDS Canada

Goal 1 continued

Objective 4 – Perform all work according to plans that are aligned with strategic objectives

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Operational and action plans and budgets complete for each fiscal year of the business cycle by September 30 of the preceding year	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff – percentage of regular employees with Employee Performance and Development Plans (EPDP)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Strategic Plan – percentage of objectives met annually[1]	Baseline to be determined	100%	100%	100%
No "out of plan" work initiated	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Establish and implement a planning framework with effective tools, including change management procedures for plans
- Develop and implement a corporate performance measurement program
- Develop and maintain a corporate event and project timeline
- Develop and maintain a strategy map linking all work to the strategic plan

[1] On March 2, 2006, Elections BC completed a five year strategic plan. All work envisioned by Elections BC over the next five years has been incorporated into this strategic plan.

Goal 2 – Ensure effective and efficient administration of electoral events

Objective 1 – Maintain an appropriate level of readiness to administer all electoral events

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Target dates established for all deliverables related to event readiness	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes
All deliverables, as defined in readiness/ event plans, complete by the established target date	Baseline to be determined	Yes	Yes	Yes

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Define readiness and establish readiness target dates for all events
- Implement event plans to point of readiness by established target dates
- Develop event plans to administer:
  - single-member plurality (SMP) election on May 12, 2009
  - referendum on single transferable vote (STV) electoral system on May 12, 2009
  - enumeration prior to 2009 General Election
  - voting area and electoral district boundary redistribution prior to 2009 General Election
  - by-election
  - recall petition
  - initiative petition
- Identify lessons learned and apply them to future events
- Review and revise appointee and election official training model

Goal 2 continued

Objective 2 – Administer electoral events within approved event plans

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Total event expenditures are managed within the established contingency of event budget	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key event milestones, including all legislated dates and critical path, defined by plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Percentage of electoral event milestones achieved	100%	100%	100%	100%
Event overtime hours per employee per week during event not to exceed 15	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reduce number of voters impacted by election official errors, resulting in Chief Electoral Officer Orders and disqualified boxes, by 50% from previous events	.11%	.055%	.0275%	.01375%

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Assign an event leader to each event
- Implement event plans from point of readiness to completion
- Monitor and communicate status of events according to plans

Goal 3 – Provide an inclusive and accessible electoral process

Objective 1 – Provide high quality services to clients in a manner that is responsive to their needs

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Annual satisfaction surveys of selected client groups to rate how well our services respond to their needs	84%	80%	80%	80%
Post-event satisfaction surveys of selected client groups to rate how well our services respond to their needs	96%	80%	80%	80%

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Consult with voters and other clients to identify means to improve their experience of the electoral process
- Address barriers based on research of best practices and cost analysis

Goal 3 continued

Objective 2 – Provide the public with easy to understand information and engaging education materials about the electoral process

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Maintain or increase public awareness of electoral process	Pre-event 87% Post-event 89%	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Percentage of schools using grade five education kit[1]	73%	100%	100%	100%
Satisfaction score for schools using grade five education kit	100%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of schools using grade 11 education kit	79%	100%	100%	100%
Satisfaction score for schools using grade 11 education kit	95%	80%	80%	80%

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Develop and implement communication plan for events (enumeration, referendum, and provincial general election)
- Develop and implement a comprehensive voter education plan (CNIB, Grade 5/11 education kits, literacy barriers, ethnic barriers, etc.)

[1] In order to measure public awareness of the electoral process in relation to the May 17, 2005 provincial general election, pre- (April 2005) and post-event (June 2005) surveys were conducted

Goal 4 – Be a learning organization that develops and shares best practices

Objective 1 – Participate in, encourage and support partnerships and inter-jurisdictional cooperation through open communications and knowledge sharing

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Participate in electoral conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participate in Electoral Technology Accord with electoral agencies across Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review of all agreements with associated partners	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Percentage of CERL[5] inquiries responded to within five business days of posting	80%	90%	90%	90%

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Research and evaluate partnerships to improve service delivery
- Develop technologies and methods that improve electoral administration
- Participate in inter-jurisdictional conferences, etc.
- External peer plan review

[5] CERL is a shared intranet site that provides a forum for all Canadian national, provincial and territorial election administrators to consult and share information

Goal 4 continued

Objective 2 – Encourage and support staff in professional development

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of training days per employee	5.3	5	5	5
Percentage of Employee Performance and Development Plan (EPDP) training goals achieved	74%	75%	75%	75%

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Implement and maintain Employee Planning and Development Program

Goal 4 continued

Objective 3 – Establish a culture of learning that fosters innovation

Measure	Base	Targets		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Workshops conducted	27	18	18	18
Percentage of new staff who have completed core curriculum or "rookie" training within six months of joining Elections BC	None	100%	100%	100%
Recognize staff for innovations that improve the way we do our business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Strategies to accomplish objectives:

- Provide new staff orientation program
- Provide staff training program and program-area-specific curriculum
- Observe or participate in electoral events administered by other jurisdictions
- Implement improvements identified through 'lessons learned' reviews
- Create opportunities for staff to exchange cross-program area knowledge (e.g. 'day in the life' tours, questions and answers, online tools)

Appendix - Glossary of Terms

By-election	An election other than one conducted as part of a general election.
Electoral district	The province is divided into electoral districts (constituencies or ridings), each returning one Member to the Legislative Assembly.
Enumeration	The registration of voters by residence-to-residence visitation or by another method directed or authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer.
General election	Elections called on the same date for all electoral districts in the province to elect all Members of the Legislative Assembly.
Initiative petition	A petition under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to have a proposed law introduced in the Legislative Assembly.
Initiative vote	If the Select Standing Committee refers a successful initiative petition and draft Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Electoral Officer must hold an initiative vote under the *Recall and Initiative Act*.
Recall petition	A petition under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to remove a Member of the Legislative Assembly from office between elections.
Referendum	If the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers that an expression of public opinion is desirable on any matter of public interest or concern, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by Regulation, order that a referendum be conducted under the *Referendum Act*. A referendum is binding on the government that initiated it.
Redistribution	A process to change electoral boundaries to account for changes in voter population or other concerns.
Voters list	The voters list is prepared and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer, and contains the names and residential addresses of registered voters in each electoral district.
Voting area	An electoral district is divided into voting areas for the purpose of assigning voters to voting places. A voting area is generally a geographic area containing no more than 400 registered voters.

ELECTIONS BC
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature